

## ADOT bows out of Lakewood freeway meeting

[By Doug Murphy | AFN](#)

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A meeting to discuss plans for the South Mountain Loop 202 Freeway and how it would impact the Lakewood development was cancelled after representatives from Arizona Department of Transportation decided not to attend.

The meeting, scheduled for next Wednesday, May 21, was organized in April at the request of John Rodriguez, a Lakewood resident and member of ADOT's South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team, to provide communication between ADOT and the people.

On Tuesday, ADOT spokesman Tim Tait wrote an e-mail to Rodriguez to say: "Upon reviewing with members of the South Mountain Study Team, previous meetings with your HOA, and in light of the fact that ADOT has no new information to provide, we have decided to cancel our appearance at next week's forum. We would continue to recommend that community members use the project Web site - available at [www.azdot.gov/ValleyFreeways](http://www.azdot.gov/ValleyFreeways) - as a source of wide-ranging information on the study, including all of the materials presented to the CAT."

"So, the bottom line is that ADOT is afraid to come to Lakewood," Rodriguz said.

With 3,000 homes, Lakewood is one of the largest neighborhoods to be impacted by the proposed freeway. The development also has some specific concerns, especially what will happen to several HOA-owned wells that provide water to the lake, which will have to be relocated if the 10-lane freeway is built, and how the association can make up lost homeowners dues from the two dozen homes that are slated to be demolished to make way for the freeway.

As recently as March 6, Tait spoke at a Foothills Club West Homeowners Association annual meeting on the Loop 202 and public involvement.

In a separate e-mail sent to the *Ahwatukee Foothills News*, Tait wrote that there is little new to report but that, "We will be sending a newsletter to residents in the study area this summer that will provide an update as to where the project currently stands."

"He's just afraid to meet the people who will be affected the most in Ahwatukee," said Rodriguez, who has lobbied hard for more health and medical information on the impact of freeways on local residents, particularly students from nearby schools.

ADOT has been attempting to update the 1985 Loop 202 plans to take into account changes and growth in the area since 2003. Currently, a draft environmental impact statement has been delayed in the approval process as ADOT and the Gila River Indian Community attempt to come to a mutually satisfying agreement on sacred cultural sites, including South Mountain in general, that are in the path of the proposed freeway.

Although Tait won't be speaking at the Lakewood meeting, he will be at the May 19 Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee meeting at Pecos Park Community center, beginning at 6 p.m., to brief the committee on the status of the draft environmental impact statement.